

City of Cambridge

Community Development Block Grant
Fiscal Year 2004 One-Year Action Plan

Public Hearing Notes from February 20th, 2003

City Staff Present: Janet Cudmore-Boswell, Robert Keller (CDBG); Marshalee Ellis-Kelhem

Attendees:

Jolyon Cowan, Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs

- ESG funded programs are facing significant cuts from the State as well as reduced funding from private donors and non-profit organizations.
- The ESG allotment itself is being reduced for FY 2004.
- The reduction in funding leads to a reduction in services which most directly affects Cambridge's most at-risk population.
- A re-deployment of HUD funds within the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) area could greatly off-set these factors.
- Shelters in the NRS area that are facing such budget shortfalls are as follows:
 - CASPAR's Emergency "Wet" Shelter at 240 Albany St, Cambridge MA 02139. CASPAR has received a 27% cut in State funding for this shelter directly leading to the loss of 6 FTEs and the reduction in daytime service.
 - Hildebrand Shelter for Homeless Families- 39 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge MA 02139. A FY 03 5% cut from DTA has precipitated a reduction in the number of their scattered site units for homeless families that house former Cambridge.
 - On the Rise day drop-in center for homeless women at 341 Broadway, Cambridge MA 02139. They anticipate a \$50,000 cut in DSS for FY 04, which will cut their outreach worker's salary. They are also expecting a 50% cut from the Mass Office for Victim's assistance of around \$20,000.
 - The Salvation Army's homeless shelter at 402 Mass Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139. They have had to cut 14 FTEs from their various programs. Eight to nine of these FTEs were directly tied to the shelter. Now the shelter is only keeping one staff person on duty vs. two in the past. This is especially troublesome in night shifts when security is more of an issue. The Shelter Director position is also not being replaced. Their cuts amounted to about \$108,000 for FY 03.

- Shelter Inc.'s Homeless Shelter at 109 School St, Cambridge, MA 02139. Shelter Inc. have already had a 17% cut from the DTA which has meant the loss of 1.4 FTE for overnight staffing of their program- meaning the shelter is less secure at night.
- Transition House's Emergency Shelter for victims of domestic violence at an undisclosed location within the NRS. Their Shelter has had a \$12,000 reduction in funding from the DTA- approximately ½ FTE and are anticipating at least double that for FY 04.
- The YWCA's Women's Transitional Housing Shelter for Women at 3 Bigelow St, Cambridge, MA 02139. It has had a 17% cut in funding from the DTA.

Elaine DeRosa, CEOC

- No formal comments, echoed concerns for Low Income Home Ownership Programs and expanded Limited Equity and Section 8 programs.

Lorraine Lavoie, Cambridge Resident

- Stated a need for more Affordable Housing Units.
- The City needs to create more Home Ownership opportunities for Low Income Residents. Suggested Limited Equity Co-ops as a way to achieve this.
- Questioned the City's Open Space focus, expressed concern in prioritizing open space over housing. Suggested more creative methods to achieve both simultaneously.

Michael Brandon, Cambridge Resident & NCSC member

- Requested a second Public Hearing for the FY 2004 One-Year Action Plan
- Stated that the North Cambridge community group has complaints with the City's use of HUD and CDBG funds – stating that the City over-emphasizes Affordable Housing at the expense of other needs.
- Using the overhead train crossings he sees as needed in North Cambridge for an example, Mr. Brandon stated that CDBG funds should also be used for short-term measures for specific and transitory needs until larger solutions are available.
- Expressed concerns over the City's Public Process, claiming that the CDBG division could do more to drive awareness of its availability and usage. Mr. Brandon suggested that the City does not do enough to involve all residents, and that the public process lacks: fairness, clarity and accuracy.

Letters from Cambridge Residents and concerned parties available upon request.

